



## **National Security Leaders Oppose the Republican OCO Gimmick**

*National Security leaders across the military services have denounced the Republican plan to increase defense spending through the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) account. Across the board, the Secretary of Defense and key leaders of the military have pointed out how using OCO for core military programs is ineffective, imperils our national security, and provides no certainty to the men and women in uniform trying to carry out their mission.*

*The bottom line is that any responsible solution to replace automatically triggered cuts must actually fix the base defense budget and provide equal relief to investments in counterterrorism, law enforcement, and economic growth that keep America strong at home. Even Senator John McCain, lead sponsor of the FY16 NDAA and Chairman of the Armed Services committee has called OCO a “gimmick” and “not legitimate budgeting.”*

**Secretary of Defense Ash Carter:** “The one-year OCO approach does nothing to reduce the deficit...Most importantly, because it doesn’t provide a stable, multi-year budget horizon, this one-year approach is managerially unsound, and also unfairly dispiriting to our force. Our military personnel and their families deserve to know their future more than just one year at a time. And not just them. Our defense industry partners, too, need stability and longer-term plans – not end-of-year crises or short-term fixes – if they are to be efficient and cutting-edge as we need them to be. Last, and fundamentally, as a nation we need to base our defense budgeting on our long-term military strategy, and that’s not a one-year project. [Senate Committee on Appropriations, [5/6/15](#)]

**Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey:** “My advice is that we need to fix our base budget, because you build the institution through the base budget, and you respond to contingencies with the fund called [Overseas] Contingency Operations. [White House, [3/18/15](#)]

**Office of Management and Budget Director Shaun Donovan:** “The inappropriate use of OCO risks undermining an essential mechanism that both parties have long agreed was meant to fund incremental costs of overseas conflicts and support our troops while in harm's way. The Subcommittee's deliberate relabeling of non-war costs as OCO clearly violates OCO funding's purpose.” [OMB Letter to House, [6/1/2015](#)]

**Air Force Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Larry O. Spencer:** “If we’re going to buy a really big weapon system, pay for F-35s or do a multi-year of C-130s, that’s really difficult to do if you’re trying to do that a year at a time.” [U.S. Air Force, [3/27/15](#)]

**Vice Chief of Naval Operations (VCNO) Adm. Michelle Howard:** “It’s the multiyear constraints that’s toughest for the Navy, particularly when you look at shipbuilding and ship contracting. And then in the past there had been restraints on OCO where it could not be used to

buy individual platforms such as aircraft. So when you look at procurement and you look at our ability to modernize, OCO, the way it's currently set up, is not available for us. And clearly for a capital ship-intensive force, multiyear funding is essential for us to continue to grow the Navy. [U.S. Naval Institute News, [3/26/15](#)]

**Army Vice Chief of Staff General Daniel B. Allyn:** "The current restrictions on the employment of OCO will not allow it to be a gap-filler that is currently being proffered to offset the reduction in our base budget that is driven by the current proposals that are before Congress. In order to meet the needs of our Army, it must have greater flexibility... it must be less restrictive and it must enable us to sustain and modernize as we go forward." [U.S. Army, [3/13/15](#)]